Why Paraeducators?

Paraeducators, in partnership with other staff, support and enhance the education of children. Paraeducators work under the supervision of teachers or other licensed personnel who have the ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of education and related service programs. Other terms used to describe paraeducators include paraprofessional, educational aide, associate, or instructional aide.

According to the Iowa Department of Education 2005 Condition of Education Report, Iowa public schools employ the full-time equivalent of 8,998.3 paraeducators. Since the inception of Iowa's voluntary certification system for paraeducators in 2000, nearly 3,000 certificates in the seven certification categories have been issued by the 20 programs that offer the coursework.

Requirements brought about by No Child Left Behind recognize the key contributions of paraeducators and call for specific competencies for paraeducators in Title I programs. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 calls for paraeducators who serve students with special needs to meet state requirements that govern paraeducator services.

Paraeducators take pride in their work and are interested in learning and strengthening their professionalism. Iowa children and youth, and their families, are the ultimate benificiaries of trained and skilled paraeducators.

As the educational system in Iowa grows to face the challenges of the 21st century, paraeducators will continue to play a critical role in helping to meet those challenges.

Beliefs

The value of paraeducators and the complexity of their roles are recognized as important to the success of the school.

Paraeducators are respected and valued members of the educational team.

Paraeducators are critical to the social, emotional, academic, and vocational success of children and youth.

Paraeducators play an active and essential role in their work with children and youth by providing encouragement, support, assistance, and advocacy.

Communication among paraeducators, licensed personnel, and parents is carefully planned and carried out.

Paraeducators understand the needs of children and youth and have the specialized training to meet student needs.

All paraeducators are provided with training prior to initiating services and ongoing staff development to keep updated on best practices and current, effective strategies.

Paraeducators have a professional identity and advocate for their profession by maintaining positive, supportive, cooperative, and professional relationships.

Teachers, administrators and other members of the educational team enable paraeducators to be effective in their work by providing resources, support, feedback, and assistance.

Leaders at the state, regional, district, and building levels provide the systems level support and resources to enable paraeducators to be effective in their work.

Developed by an Iowa Paraeducator Task Force in 1998

What's a Paraeducator?

Associate Educational Aide Instructionl Aide Paraprofessional



As key service providers who work under the supervision of licensed educators in a variety of educational settings, paraeducators contribute to the social, emotional and intellectual growth of children and youth.

Increasing Numbers of Iowa Paraeducators

Number of Full-time Equivalent
Paraeducators in Iowa Public Schools

1985-86 school year	2,668.6
2004-05 school year	8,998.3

The FTE of paraeducators increased 237.2 percent from 1985-1986 to 2004-2005

For more information about paraeducator programs, contact:

- √ Geri McMahon, Consultant for Paraeducator Certification Iowa Board of Educational Examiners 515-281-8323
- √ Norma Lynch, Consultant for NCLB Paraeducator Issues and Paraeducator Preparation Programs Iowa Department of Education 515-281-6038

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Iowa Department of Education October 2006

What Do Paraeducators Do?

Support a safe, positive teaching and learning environment

- √ Paraeducators are often the first people to greet students as they get off the bus and enter the school building. They supervise students in a variety of settings with varying amounts of structure and often accompany students as they move around the building and in the community.
- √ Paraeducators are positive role models.
- √ Paraeducators, under the guidance of licensed staff members, help organize and maintain the physical space, keep records for reports, and monitor behavior and learning.
- √ Paraeducators facilitate the inclusion of students in typical classrooms and settings.
- √ Paraeducators follow guidelines established by the school district to protect the safety and well-being of learners and staff.

Assist in the development of physical and intellectual development

- √ Paraeducators support the teaching and learning of all students.
- √ Paraeducators' role in assessment may include reading tests, scribing, and adapting tests under the direction of teachers. They may observe students, record and summarize data, maintain records and share information with teachers and other professionals.
- √ Paraeducators foster the learning of students from diverse cultures, language backgrounds, learning styles and abilities.

Support social, emotional and behavioral development

- √ Paraeducators carry out behavior management plans developed by teachers and other professionals and support and assist students in meeting class expectations for appropriate behavior.
- V Paraeducators often support inclusion by providing close supervision and reinforcing generalization of positive behavior.

Establish positive and productive relationships

√ Because paraeducators work with a large variety of other staff including other paraeducators, teachers, administrators and support staff, they function as members of effective instructional teams.

Integrate effectively the technology to support student learning

- √ Paraeducators use high and low tech methods and equipment to facilitate learning for all students.
- √ Paraeducators, in some cases, work with students who need specialized equipment for health or mobility.
- √ Paraeducators may use technology to record grades, points, or observations. They also may enlarge, modify, and duplicate materials.

Practice ethical and professional standards of conduct on an ongoing basis

- √ Paraeducators practice the standards of ethical conduct approved by their school district.
- √ Paraeducators model life-long learning by participating in professional, college, or inservice opportunities.

Certification Opportunities

Paraeducator Generalist I

Level II Areas of Concentration

Special Needs PK-12
Early Childhood PK-3
English as a Second Language
School Library Media
Career and Transition Programs: Grades 5-12

Advanced Certification

Advanced PK-12

Institutions with Paraeducator Certification Programs

AEA 1 Keystone AEA Elkader, IA 52043

AEA 267 Cedar Falls, IA 50613-6290

AEA 8 Prairie Lakes AEA Pocahontas, IA 50574

AEA 9 Mississippi Bend AEA Bettendorf, Iowa 52722

AEA 10 Grant Wood AEA Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

AEA 11 Heartland AEA Johnston, IA 50131

> Northwest AEA Sioux City, IA 51106 AEA 13 Loess Hills AEA

AEA 14 Green Valley AEA

Concil Bluffs, IA 51502-1109

Creston, IA 50801-1199

AEA 15 Southern Prairie AEA
Ottumwa, IA 52501-1163

AEA 16 Great River AEA Burlington, IA 52601-1065

Clinton Community College Clinton, IA 52732

Muscatine Community College Muscatine, IA 52761

Ellsworth Community College Iowa Falls, IA 50126

Iowa Lakes Community College

Iowa Central Community College Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Kirkwood Community College Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-2068

Northeast Iowa Community College Calmar, IA 52132

> Scott Community College Bettendorf, IA 52722-6804

> > Western Iowa Tech Community College Sioux City, IA 51102

For more information: www.state.ia.us/boee/para.html#b